The shortening of the Slavic long circumflex – one mora law in Croatian

INTRODUCTION

The general reflexes of the Proto-Slavic old long circumflex (*”) in Croatian have been known for a long time. In monosyllabic and disyllabic words (not counting the final *yers*), it yields Croatian long falling accent (´), cf. PS *gôrdh > Croat. grád 'town' and PS *zôltö > Croat. zláto 'gold'. In contrast to this, the old *” is shortened in trisyllabic and polysyllabic words, cf. PS *šynove > Croat. sinovi (: sîn < *sînъ) 'sons', PS *pôrsète > Croat. práseta (: prâse < *pôrsè) 'pig'. This is uncontroversial and widely accepted.

However, this simplified approach does not really tell us what happens with the 'inbetween' cases, i.e. what happens with the words that have three syllables including the *yers*. In these cases, one finds examples which are not really clear at first glance, for instance the preservation of length in cases like gládno < *gôldynъ 'hungry' but shortening in cases like mûško < *môžysko 'male' (: múž < *môžъ 'man'), or the preservation of length in cases like bôbanj < *bôbyny 'drum' but shortening in cases like vîčan < *vëçynъ 'eternal' (: vîjk < *vëckъ 'age'). It is obvious that some kind of explanation has to be given here since the quoted simple rule about disyllables and trisyllables does not help us here.

I have tackled this problem already in one of my articles (Kapović 2005a: 77–81) and I believe that the explanation given there is basically correct (cf. also Kapović 2008: 13). However, some very important examples have not been discussed in that article and the case of the words like *môžysko has not been properly explained there. Thus, a more detailed approach to the subject is needed as well as careful examination of additional data. That is the purpose of this article.

I have already tried to explain the shortening of pretonic length in Slavic with the help of morae. The claim is that pretonic lengths in Slavic are shortened in front of two or more morae (cf. Kapović 2005a: 101 and Holzer 2007: 74–75). There, the concept of morae is used to explain in which positions pretonic lengths are shortened and in which ones they are preserved. Mora is defined as follows: Slavic originally long vowels (*a, *ě, *i, *u, *y, *ç, *q and diphthongs *or, *er, *ol, *el, *yr, *sr, *sr, *yl, *yl) count like two morae, Slavic originally short vowels (*e, *o) count as one mora and the *yers, the 'reduced' vowels (*ь, *ь) count as half a mora. In this article, I shall try to prove that the shortening of the old long circumflex in Croatian can be explained via the morae concept as well.

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1 I would like to thank Marko Kapović for proofreading the text.
2 See for instance Đabo 2000: 18 for this kind of simple explanation.
3 Except in the final open syllable where they are shortened (like in *rôká > *rôká) and thus count as a short vowel. In traditional accentological approach, all lengths in final open syllables are shortened. However, if one accepts that some lengths are preserved in final open syllables (like Croat. dial. instr. sg. -î < *-î in -stems), then, of course, those are counted as two morae as well and pretonic length is shortened in front of them.
THE CONDITIONS OF THE SHORTENING OF THE LONG CIRCUMFLEX

Here I shall adduce the examples for the long circumflex shortening rule, which point to a variant treatment of the long circumflex in Croatian due to syllabic structure, i.e. to the number of morae after the long circumflex. The examples provided are those with a regular reflex. Words with analogical changes will be dealt with in the following text.

1) PS *mǐ > Northern Čakavian/Kajkavian mı we
2) PS *dǎr > Croat. dǎr gift
3) *zōlt > zlǎto gold
c) *bǒbǐt > bǔbanj drum
d) *mǒžǔsko > mǔško male
e) *mǒldǔst > mlǎdǔst youth
f) *sǔnovo > sǐnovo sons

The example of mı shows the preservation of the long circumflex in monosyllabic words4. Additional examples from the same dialects are tǐ thou, vǐ you. As for Štokavian, one could cite aorist 2nd and 3rd person sg. like pi < *pǐ 'drank' (from pīti 'drink') for the same kind of development. However, these kinds of examples are not really reliable since it is quite certain that their actual Proto-Slavic form was *pǐtį5 and that the ending *-tŷ was subsequently lost in Croatian (like in the 3rd sg. of the present tense).

The examples like dǎr and zlǎto are not problematic. The long circumflex is always preserved in such examples. The short falling accent in cases like the prefixed 2nd/3rd person aorist like na pǐti (from nāpǐti 'get drunk') is either regular from the form *nǎpǐtį (which would behave like *mǒldǔst) or is analogical to pǒpǐ (from pǒpǐti 'drink up') that has an original short vowel6.

Like dǎr and zlǎto, the reflexes mlǎdǔst and sǐnovo are also not very problematic and here I refer to Kapović 2005a: 80–81. However, a few things need to be discussed. Basically, there is no difference between shortening in mlǎdǔst and shortening in mǔško. In both cases, the long circumflex is shortened in front of one and a half mora (one full vowel + one yer), the difference being only in their sequence. Thus, it seems logical to assume that the long circumflex was treated in the same way in both cases. The shortening like mlǎdǔst also explains why prepositions, conjunctions and particles that obtain the absolute initial falling accent in the enclinomena forms of the mobile accentual paradigm (a. p. c)7 like nā glǎv < *nǎ golv 'on the head' almost always have ˇ. Forms like nǐ bōg < *nǐ bog behave like *mǒldǔst and forms like nā oko < *nǎ oko 'on the eye' behave like *sǔnovo. However, there is one exception – dialectal forms like za me < *zǎ mê 'for

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4 Standard Croatian (i.e. Neo-Štokavian) mı derives from the older form mǐ, which has a secondary accent by analogy to jā (cf. Kapović 2006: 55).
5 One would expect this secondary ending exactly in a. p. c, where the circumflex appears (cf. Дыбо 2000: 304–309).
6 The former is a possibility in the case one would refrain from reconstructing the ending *-tŷ in these aorist forms.
7 Forms a, b, c are used for Proto-Slavic accentual paradigms and A, B, C for modern (Croatian) accentual paradigms. A colon (:) is used to indicate the length of modern accentual paradigms (B:, C:).
me', nā te < *nā te 'on you' etc.8 Here, the long falling accent is preserved like in the example zlāto.

There are some examples in which there seems to be no shortening of the sīnovi type. A case in point would be possessive adjectives ending in -ov like vūk, vūkovo9 'wolf's' or muževo 'husband's', where one would expect shortening. However, these are easily explained by analogy to the basic nouns vi̞k, mu̞ž. Cf. the original shortened forms in dial. forms kūmovu (fem. acc. sg.), kūmovi (masc. nom. pl.) from kūm – kūna 'best man' in Donja Bebrina in Posavina (Old Štokavian)10. In the standard language, the accent is levelled – kūnov, kūmovi by analogy to kūm. See also a place name Vūkovo Selō in the Lower Sutla (donjosutlanski) Kajkavian/Čakavian dialect11 and compare it with the usual possessive adjective vūkovo. The original shortening is also seen in the surname Vūkōv (cf. the usual adjective vūkow/Vākow). Secondary analogical length of the same type is also seen in the name Tijelo 'Corpus Christi', where the orthography <Tijelovo> itself points to the length. This is analogical to the basic form tijelo 'body' and the original shortened form can be seen in the alternative form Tjelo, which is also a very common pronunciation.

There are more problems concerning examples like *bôbnu > būbanj and *môžsko > miško. Here we propose that the old long circumflex is regularly maintained in words like būbanj (i.e. words having two yers after the circumflex) and that it is shortened in all other cases – that is, in all cases that have one full vowel plus a yer, two full vowels etc. So the limit of the preservation of length is at two yers after the accent, i.e. one mora. Since every yer counts as half a mora, two yers count as just one mora, so examples like *bôbnu are in mora terms the same as examples like *zôlto and that is why the length of the circumflex is preserved there. That is also why we posit the one mora law that says – Proto-Slavic long circumflex is preserved in Croatian only in front of one or less morae12.

There are a couple of problems with examples like *bôbnu > būbanj. First of all, one would expect shortening in the oblique forms of the word. Forms like *bôbnna (gen. sg.) and *bôbnna (dat. sg.) should yield *bûbnja, *bûbnju, the same as *môžsko yields miško. It is obvious that the attested forms bûbnja, bûbnju are analogical to the nom/acc. sg. bûbanj. This kind of levelling is clearly attested in the word lakat 'elbow'. Here, in place of Proto-Slavic *ôlkâst we find in Croatian two variants – lâkat and lâkata, both widely attested in various dialects. How did this situation come about? What we expect from the old *ôlkâst, gen. sg. *ôlkâsti is Croatian *lâkat, gen. sg. *lâkata (with a transfer to o-stems). This alternation was then resolved by various dialects generalizing one form or the other13. Another clear case of shortening of the miško type is the acc. sg. djéču < *děčqo 'children' (cf. dijete 'child'). The nom. sg. form djeca has the short syllable by analogy to the forms with the initial accent. As for the form srđe 'heart', I shall not discuss

9 The feminine form vūkova is analogical, in Proto-Slavic it was *vuková, cf. Đabo 1981: 126.
10 My data.
11 DGO 2007: 220.
12 Actually, by analogy to the two morae law (pretonic length is shortened in front of two or more morae), one would expect the name one and a half morae law, but this name was not chosen for obvious reasons.
13 Cf. also the case in Dubrovnik, where lâkat is 'elbow' and lâkata is 'ell' (ARj).
this problematic form here again. There are many indices that point to Proto-Slavic form *sъrdъce and thus to the shortening of the old long circumflex but this kind of form is problematic in Proto-Slavic (one would expect *sъrdъce). For more cf. Kapović 2005a: 80f and Kapović 2005b.

The main chunk of evidence for different results of levellings in the lāk/lākat type words comes from *-ьнъ and *-ькъ adjectives. Here, in accentual paradigm one can reconstruct Proto-Slavic forms like: *gōlsънъ – *gōlsъно – *gōlsъno 'loud' and *těgъкъ – *těgъká – *těgъsko 'heavy' (cf. Дыбо 1981: 94, 107, Дыбо 2000: 159, 171). Up till now, it has been mostly taken for granted that length is preserved in forms like Croat. glāsa–glāsno and těška–těško. However, according to the one mora law we posited, one would not expect a complete maintenance of length but a complicated set of short/long alternations in various forms of these adjectives.

In Proto-Slavic, we find:\(^14\):

masc. – neut. – fem.
N. *gōlsънъ – *gōlsъно – *gōlsъno
G. *gōlsъна – *gōlsънъ
D. *gōlsъну – (*gōlsънě)
A. *gōlsънъ – *gōlsъно – *gōlsънъ
L. *gōlsънě – (*gōlsънě)
I. (*gōlsънъmъ) – *gōlsънъjo

In Croatian, one would expect the following paradigm after the phonetic shortening of the one mora law:

masc. – neut. – fem.
N. *glašan – *glašno – *glašnъ\(^15\)
G. *glašna – *glašně
D. *glašnu
A. *glašan/glašna – *glašno – *glašnu
L. *glašně (*glašnu)
I. *glašnъm

n. *glašni – *glašnъ – *glašnъ

\(^14\) The forms in the brackets are the ones that have not been reflected in Croatian. Instead of them, definite endings were taken.

\(^15\) For the preservation of length here, cf. plátno < *poltъno (Kapović 2005a: 89–90).
a. ∗glāsne – ∗glāsnā – ∗glāsne

The same type of pattern would be expected in ∗těžak – ∗těško – ∗těškā etc. This kind of length alternation was hardly maintainable, so what occurred was that either short or long forms were generalized. In some cases, only the long form is attested (like in glādan < ∗gōldān 'hungry'), in others it is just the short form that is attested (like in slāstān < ∗sōlstān 'delicious' or krěpak < ∗krēpky 'brisk') and in some cases both forms are present (like in glāsan/glāsan < ∗gōlsyń or těžak/těžak < ∗těgšyk)16. Generalizing the length meant maintenance of the a. p. C mobile accent, while generalizing the shortened forms meant a shift to a. p. A (glāsan – glāsna – glāsno).

Here is the exact situation in ∗-ъъ adjectives 17:

a) only short stem attested
rědan orderly, slāstan, sprāsna with young (of sows), ždrēma with young (of mares) 18

b) short stem in some dialects, long in others
bītan/bītan important, glāsan/glāsan loud, gnjūsan/gnjūsan dispicable, krēpan/krijepan brisk, māstan/māstan greasy (A in Kajk.),19 mīran/mīran still (A in Kajk.), prāšan/prāšan dusty, sjājan/sjājan glory (A in Kajk.), skīban/skīban caring (A in Kajk.), snježan/snježan snowy, srāman/srāman ashamed (A in Kajk.), strašan/strašan terrifying, svještan/svijēstan aware, vječan (Vuk viječan), zračan/zračan airy (A in Kajk.), žučan/žučan bitter 20

c) only long stem attested
bijēsan rageous, būdan awake, glādan, hlādan cold, mrāčan dark, zlātan golden21

In the ∗-ъъ adjectives, the end results are a little bit different, looking at the numbers of various types of levellings (but there are far less examples here than in ∗-ъъ adjectives):

a) only short stem attested
brīdak sharp, džak daring, krěpak, kṛhak fragile, slādak sweet

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18 In some dialects, combined forms are attested, cf. in Sikerevci (Posavina, Old Štokavian – my data) těžak – těšak – těška – těško.
17 For the reconstruction of Proto-Slavic accentual paradigms, cf. Ďabo 1981: 72–107, Ďabo 2000: 154–175. Also, some of the information relevant for the reconstruction of particular accentual types is provided briefly in the footnotes.
18 Cf. rěd – rěda order, slāst – slāsti relish (also *sōldhāk ‘sweet’), prāše – prāšeta pig (also Siče in Posavina 3rd sg. se prasī farrows), ždrijēbe – ždreibeta foal (also Siče 3rd sg. se ždreibž foals).
19 In Kajkavian, generalization of the short variant occurs in cases in which it never occurs in Štokavian or Čakavian.
20 Cf. bīt – bīti essence (also bīti – bīla be – was), glās – glāsa voice, gnjās – gnjūsa scoundrel, Slovene krepim (also *kṛěpky ‘brisk’), māst – māsti fat (also Siče in Posavina 3rd sg. māštij), Kajkavian/Čakavian mīr – mīra peace (Štokavian mīra is secondary), prāh – prāhur dust (also Siče 1st sg. prāšūm), sjāj – sjāja glow, skīb – skībi care, snjež – snježa snow, srāma – srāma shame, stroh – strēha fear (but strēiti scare), svijēst – svijēsti consciousness, vjēk – vjēka age, zrāk – zrāka air, žuč – žučō bile.
b) short stem in some dialects, long in others
*měk*({ak})/*měk* soft, *piťak/piťak* drinkable, *těžak/těžak*, *viťak/viťak* slim

Various kinds of levellings of shortness/length and various types of double forms in *-ьъ* and *-ъъ* adjectives cannot be explained in any other way than by assuming the existence of the one mora law. Thus these types of adjectives provide valuable additional data for the discussion of the rules of shortening of Proto-Slavic long circumflex in Croatian.

**Literature**


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23 Shortening also occurs in some *-ьъ* and *-ъъ* adjectives that have originally belonged to a. p. b, cf. for instance *грешан* 'sinful' and *кратак* 'short'. However, this process is not directly connected to the shortenings in the a. p. c and does not undermine our analysis presented here. More on this in Kapović forthcoming.